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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 43  
By Cooper B

A RESOLUTION relative to the extension of the Healthy Start program.

WHEREAS, over 20 years of national research and experience have established that home visitation programs are highly effective in providing high risk families with support to promote healthy development of young children; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Healthy Start program, which began in 1994 and which emphasizes the nationally recognized model of home visitation, has proven to be effective in enhancing the developmental success of participating Tennessee children; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Healthy Start program has established an enviable record of cost effectiveness by reducing reliance upon state-supported programs for out-of-home placement for abused and neglected children and through the early provision of preventative health and developmental services; and

WHEREAS, such programs are presently operative in only a few select counties; however, the extension of the Healthy Start program into all counties in Tennessee is a high priority for the General Assembly; now therefore,

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BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That the Department of Children's Services, with cooperation from the Department of Health, is hereby requested to conduct a feasibility study, including fiscal analysis, relative to: (1) the extension of the Healthy Start pilot program into ten (10) additional counties in fiscal year 2001-2002; and (2) the future expansion of the Healthy Start pilot program into a statewide program. Such feasibility study should also identify and specify actions and methods to achieve coordination among state agencies and programs that provide developmental and health-related services to families and children.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That it is the sense of this General Assembly that the reports mandated by Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 37-3-703, should also include longitudinal statistics for each component of information about program participants. Information gathered and evaluations performed by the various state agencies should be utilized to develop data for long-term assessments of the overall effectiveness of the Healthy Start program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That it is the sense of this General Assembly that the state, or its contractors, should support TennCare participating families in accessing services, especially early, periodic, screening, diagnosis and treatment ("EPSDT") services for children.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That The Department of Children's Services, with cooperation from the Department of Health, should complete and submit its feasibility report relative to the extension of the Healthy Start program to the General Assembly no later than May 15, 2001.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an enrolled copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Commissioner of Children's Services and the Commissioner of Health.